

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01292 01 OF 02 241605Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----241608 029382 /42

O 241453Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1930

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 1292

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE,CYRUS)
SUBJECT: MEETING WITHPRIMIN KHULAYFAWI

1. FOLLOWING IS UNCLEARED MEMCOM OF THE SECRETARY'S MEETING
WITH PRIME MINISTER KHULAYFAWI FEB 21.

2. DATE AND PLACE: FEB. 21, 1977, THE PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE, DAMASCUS, SYRIA. SYRIAN PARTICIPANTS: MAJOR GENERAL
ABD AL-RAHMAN KHULAYFAWI, PRIME MINISTER, ABD AL-HALIM KHADDAM,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. U.S.
PARTICIPANTS: THE SECRETARY, PHILIP HABIB, UNDER
SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ALFRED L. ATHERTON, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, AMBASSADOR
RICHARD W. MURPHY, MR. ISA SABBAGH, MR. ROBERT PELLETREAU, DCM.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER WELCOMED THE SECRETARY AND SAID HE WAS
VERY HAPPY THE SECRETARY HAD COME TO SYRIA. HE COMMENTED THAT
THE SECRETARY'S TRIP MUST HAVE BEEN VERY ARDUOUS AND EXPRESSED
THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD BE GOING HOME WITH POSITIVE AND WORTH-
WHILE RESULTS WHICH WOULD SOON BE REFLECTED IN PROGRESS
TOWARDS PEACE IN THE AREA.

4. THE SECRETARY THANKED THE PRIME MINISTER AND SAID IT
HAD BEEN USEFUL TO MEET WITH LEADERS IN THE AREA AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 01292 01 OF 02 241605Z

LEARN FIRSTHAND THEIR VIEWS ON REACHING PEACE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST AND ON WHAT THE US MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO. HE
SAID HE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET
WITH PRES. ASAD. THE PRESIDENT HAD GIVEN HIM AN EXTREMELY
FRANK AND CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM AND HIS VIEWS
ON HOW IT SHOULD BE ATTACKED. THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD
BE REPORTING TO PRESIDENT CARTER IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN

TO THE US AND THE US WOULD THEN BEGIN TO REFLECT ON HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THE COMMON GOAL OF PEACE.THE SECRETARY ADDED THAT THE US LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING IN CLOSEST COOPERATION WITH SYRIA. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S GREAT INTEREST IN ECONOMIC ISSUES AND ADDED THAT HE HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH SEVERAL USAID OFFICIALS EARLIER THAT MORNING THE PROJECTS ON WHICH TMEY WERE WORKING.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT CONCERN WITH ECONOMIC MATTERS WAS A NATURAL THING FOR SYRIA WHICH FOUND ITSELF IN THE POSITION OF HAVING TO SPEND LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY IN THE MILITARY AREA AT THE SAME TIME AS IT WAS TRYING TO DEVELOP ECONOMICALLY. SYRIA WAS PERHAPS IN A UNIQUE POSITION IN THIS RESPECT SINCE IT WAS DOING BOTH AT THE SAME TIME.SYRIA HAD UNTAPPED NATURAL RESOURCES WHICH WOULD BENEFIT ITS PEOPLE IF FUNDS COULD BE DEVOTED TO THIS OBJECTIVE INSTEAD OF DEFENSE. SYRIA, THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED, WAS TURNING TT AGRICULTURE AS A BASIC PRIORITY. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH AMBASSADOR MURPHY WITH THE IDEA OF OBTAINING US HELP IN DOING AN ASSESSMENT OF SYRIAN AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE US COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS AREA. EVEN IN SYRIA'S DARKETS MOMENTS KHULAYFAWI SAID HE HAD BEEN OPTIMISTIC; HE WAS NOW EVEN MORE OPTIMISTIC. HE ASKED WHETHER THE SECETARY WAS OPTIMISTIC OR NOT.

6. THE SECRETARY REPLIED HE WAS OPTIMISTIC IN A SENSE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 01292 01 OF 02 241605Z

BECAUSE IT WAS QUITE CLEAR EVERYONE AGREED THAT STATES OF THE AREA COULD NOT GO ON DEVOTING CRUSHING AMOUNTS TO ARMS THAT SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS. EACH OF THE LEADERS HE HAD TALKED WITH,INCLUDING THOSE IN ISRAEL, HAD SAID THE SAME THING. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. IF A START COULD BE MADE WITH THAT PREMISE IN MIND, IT SHOULD NOT BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH THE GOAL THAT EVERYONE WAS SEEKING. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SECRETARY ADDED, HE DID NOT WISH TO MINIMIZE THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH EXISTED AT THIS POINT IN TIME. HE WAS THEREFORE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC. HE SAID HE WANTED TO ASSURE THE PM THAT THE US COUNTED ON DOING ALL IT COULD TO WORK TOWARDS THE GOAL OF ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01292 02 OF 02 241646Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----241650 029839 /42

O 241453Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1931

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DAMASCUS 1292

NODIS

7. THE PM COMMENTED THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS TO HIM THAT THE SECRETARY HAD HAD AN ARDUOUS TRIP. THE SYRIANS WERE FULLY AWARE OF HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH LEADERS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES WITH VARYING VIEWPOINTS. WHAT MADE IT WORTHWHILE, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THE SECRETARY'S EFFORTS SHOULD LEAD TO RESULTS. PERHAPS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE US THE SECRETARY COULD SPEND A FEW DAYS RESTING IN SYRIA. THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT NEITHER THE PRIME MINISTER NOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER SET A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE IN THIS RESPECT AS TEX HAD NOT HAD A VACATION IN YEARS.

8. THE SECRETARY ASKED HOW WORK ON SYRIA'S IRRIGATION PROJECTS WAS PROGRESSING.
THE PM REPLIED THAT LAND RECLAMATION WAS AN INTENSIVE ACTIVITY. THE EXISTENCE OF GYPSUM IN THE SOIL IN SOME AREAS HAD NECESSITATED A HIGH EXPENDITURE. 640,000 HECTARES WERE BEING BROUGHT UNDER CULTIVATION BUT WORK WAS NOT PROGRESSING AS FAST AS HE WOULD WISH. THIS WAS AN AREA EQUAL TO THE TOTAL AREA UNDER IRRIGATION IN ALL THE REST OF SYRIA. THE FOREIGN MINISTER INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT THAT HE HOPED THE US WAS INTERESTED IN ASSISTING SYRIA IN THE LAND RECLAMATION AREA. IT WOULD BE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF DETENTE SINCE THE SOVIET UNION HAD BUILT THE EUPHRATES DAM, IF THE US COULD ASSIST IN RECLAIMING THE LAND AROUND IT. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT EVEN THOUGH THE RUSSIANS HAD BUILT THE DAM IT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 01292 02 OF 02 241646Z

REMAINED A SYRIA DAM. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT THERE WERE GREAT POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND SYRIA IN THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD. SYRIA HAD

POTENTIAL AS A FOOD PRODUCING NATION FOR THE ENTIRE AREA.

9. THE SECRETARY ASKED ABOUT ANIMAL PRODUCTION IN SYRIA. THE PM REPLIED THAT IN THE DESERT AREA OF SYRIA ALONE THERE WERE VAST NATURAL PASTURES WHICH COULD SUPPORT 14 TO 20 MILLION HEAD OF SHEEP. AGAIN, THE POTENTIALITIES WERE NOT BEING FULLY UTILIZED. EQUIPMENT WAS INADEQUATE AND TRAINED MANPOWER WAS A PROBLEM. IN THE GHAB, THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED, SYRIA HAD 90,000 HECTARES, AN AREA EQUIVALENT TO THE AGRICULTURAL AREA OF HOLLAND, AND HOLLAND'S CAPACITY TO EXPORT ANIMAL PRODUCTS WAS FAMOUS. SYRIA'S PROBLEMS WERE OBTAINING TECHNICIANS AND EQUIPMENT AND MAINTAINING STABILITY. THAT IS WHY THE US HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS AREA. CERTAIN COUNTRIES, THE PRIME MINISTER REMARKED, SEEMED DRIVEN TO NEEDLESS LEFTIST DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES. ONE WAS ALMOST LED TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS AN IMPLIED AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST TO DRIVE PEOPLE IN THAT DIRECTION. POVERTY WAS AN UNREASONING FORCE. IT MIGHT BE THAT A NATION'S ECONOMIC EFFORTS WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT ON A SHORT VISIT SUCH AS THE SECRETARY'S BUT PRIME MINISTERS TENDED TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THE AREAS OF GREATEST CONCERN TO THEIR PEOPLES.

10 THE SECRETARY SAID THAT EVERY LEADER HE HAD TALKED WITH IN THE AREA HAD EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN HIS COUNTRY. HE HAD SPENT TIME IN EACH COUNTRY DISCUSSING ITS ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE PM COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT. MANY FOREIGN MINISTERS AND MANY VISITORS SAW ONLY THE FACADE OF A COUNTRY. THE BURDEN RESTED ON THOSE WHO HAD TO DEAL DAILY WITH THESE QUESTIONS AND WORK WITH THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS IN SOLVING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 01292 02 OF 02 241646Z

THEM. HE SAID HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE VISIT OF THE SECRETARY WOULD HAVE MANY BENEFICIAL RESULTS. SYRIA LOOKED FORWARD TO PEACE AND STABILITY SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS COULD LIVE A MORE COMFORTABLE LIFE. EVERYONE IN FACT LOOKED AT LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF WHAT THEY WISHED FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

11. THE SECRETARY SAID HE HAD HEARD ON A NEWS BROADCAST THAT SYRIA'S NEIGHBOR TO THE EAST WAS ACCUSING HIM OF MEDDLING IN AFFAIRS OF THE AREA AND WAS SAYING HE SHOULD GO HOME. THE PM REPLIED THAT FACTS AND ACTIONS WOULD OVERCOME THESE THINGS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE US HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SITUATION (IRAQ AND SYRIA) AND REFERRED TO THE REPORT OF CONGRESS (THE PIKE COMMITTEE) ACCORDING TO WHICH THE US HAD HELPED BRING ABOUT AN END

TO THE KURDISH QUESTION IN ORDER TO FREE IRAQ TO TURN
AGAINST SYRIA. THIS REPORT HAD RECENTLY FEATURED
PROMINENTLY IN AN ARTICLE BY HEYKAL.

12. MR. HABIB SAID IT WAS NOT "REPORTED" BY HEYKAL BUT
"MISINTERPRETED" BY HEYKAL. THIS WAS AN OLD STORY. THE
US WAS NOT INTERESTED IN USING IRAQ AGAINST ANYONE.
SOMEONE WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO DISTORT SUCH STORIES. IT WAS
TRUE THE US USED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE KURDISH REBELS ALONG
WITH IRAN. IRAN HAD COME TO A DECISION TO IMPRVE ITS
RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AND HAD DONE SO. THE US ONLY LEARNED
ABOUT IT LATER. NONE OF THIS, HE SAID, WAS DIRECTED AGAINST
SYRIA. KHADDAM RETORTED THAT WHEN ONE READ LEAKS FROM THE
SENATE AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ONE TENDED TO BELIEVE
THEM ESPECIALLY WHEN SUCH REPORTS SOUNDED PLAUSIBLE. LOOK
WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO KING HUSSEIN 48 HOURS BEFORE THE
SECRETARY'S ARRIVAL, AND NO ONE IN THE US HAD EVEN MADE A
SERIOUS DENIAL. THE REPORT WOULD ALSO BE THE COUP DE
GRACE FOR WILLY BRANDT, YET NO ONE WHO KNOW BRANDT WOULD
EVER BELIEVE THAT HE WAS AN AGENT FOR ANY FOREIGN POWER.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 DAMASC 01292 02 OF 02 241646Z

13. THE SECETARY SAID IT HAD NEVER BEEN SUGGEST THAT
ANY OF THESE PLEOPLE WERE AGENTS AXCEPTS BY THOSE WHO WISHED
TO TWIST THE SITUATION TO THEIR OWN DESIRES. HE THANKED THE
PRIME MINISTER AGAIN FOR RECEIVING HIM, AND THE AMERICAN
SIDE TOOK ITS LEAVE.
MURPHY

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETING REPORTS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC01292
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840076-1273, N770001-0652
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770214/aaaaaml.tel
Line Count: 257
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4371c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3244427
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PRIMIN KHULAYFAWI
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, SY, US, XF, (VANCE, CYRUS R), (KHULAYFAWI, ABD AL-RAHMAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4371c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009